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CULTURE

FREE

APPROVED
BY THE
COMICS
CODE

AUTHORITY

CHEAP

SPECIAL

EDITION

CRINGE

IN THIS ISSUE:

the TRUE story of how I
got the city of Nashville
to place a historic marker
for the QUEEN OF PINUPS:

BETTIE

PAGE



HOT OFF THE PRESSES

SPECIAL EDITION

you are holding in your hand the first of many "special history themed zines" that I'm planning on putting out this year! this one was an obvious choice - it's the story of the Bettie Page historic marker. I surely hope you enjoy it, and I hope it encourages people to get more involved with local history...if you aren't already. well.....HERE WE GO!!!

Welcome to this VERY special edition Culture Grunge zine - if you went out of your way to pick one up, let it be known that I super appreciate it. This zine will be a lot different than my normal ones...this one is more of a personal narrative but allow me to say that every word is true!

This is the story of my journey of getting a historic marker placed in honor of Bettie Mae Page outside of her old high school, Hume Fogg. For those of you who don't know, Bettie Page was the star student of her class in 1940. She was Salutatorian, co-editor of the school yearbook, voted "girl most likely to succeed" by her classmates, and was in nearly every club and organization imaginable. Bettie thrived and excelled at her school and honestly, it was probably more of a home to her than her ACTUAL home. Because of all of this, I knew that location was the only place it could go. I also knew that could possibly be tricky and could make things a little harder to pull off.

BACKGROUND: WHERE DID THE IDEA COME FROM??

I had thought for a long time that it would be a really cool thing for Nashville to formally honor Bettie Page. I remember when I worked in downtown Nashville there was a Bettie Page Clothing store down on the corner of 4th and Broad. I thought that was so cool because she literally went to high school just a couple of blocks up the road from it! I soon learned that not many people really even knew that. It actually kinda blew my mind! I remember once that I went into that store with a friend and I mentioned to one of the workers about how Bettie was from Nashville and SHE DIDN'T EVEN KNOW. That was wild. So, fast forward to 2022. One day I was looking up unique and interesting historic markers from around the country, and came across some really neat ones. It got my mind going....would a marker for Bettie even stand a chance? Would it be too racy, would people understand her true impact and her significance to pop culture, fashion, feminism, modeling, etc? I knew I had to give it a shot. Off I went to the Metro Nashville Historical Commission website to see what the qualifications were. Here is what it said, verbatim: "The subject of any marker erected by the Metropolitan Historical Commission should be a person, place, structure, or event that has local importance and, wherever possible, significance in the broad pattern of Tennessee or national history. The event, person, structure, or place should have achieved historical significance fifty years or more ago." Well I'll be damn - I'd say Bettie DEFINITELY qualified!

TIME TO GET TO WORK - MAKING THE PROPOSAL TO THE CITY

Creating the proposal wasn't a cakewalk. Let me just say that I finally put my history degree to use. So, you can't just send in a letter to the commission saying that you think it would be cool to have a marker for someone - you have to make the historical case. That involves only using solid credible sources to back up your historical significance claims. Anyways, some of the sources were not too incredibly hard to find. I wanted to include that Bettie graduation Salutatorian of her class (the commission chose to omit that, which I'll explain later) and that was easy to prove. I wanted to include that she was one of the most photographed models of the 1950s....well how do you "prove" that? Turns out, there are numerous articles and books that prove that claim. I cited a few and took care of that! I further wanted to include that she left her profession in 1957 - turns out that I didn't need to look further than her obituary published in the New York Times for that tidbit. Then comes the biggest thing that I wanted on the marker: how Bettie became a pop culture and feminist icon years after her success as a model. The thing about Bettie, if you don't know, is that she became WAY more influential on society decades after her modeling years were over. Fun fact: she didn't even know it. She had no idea how popular she had become in the 80s and 90s with young people, artists, musicians.....all types. SO, to prove this statement I dug out some old articles from Rolling Stone, LA Weekly, and The Tennessean that were all written in the late 80s and early 90s. BOOM. Not only did I have to notate all my claims, but I had to include copies of all my source materials. I went a little overboard on that part....I think I ended up including around 20 pages of material. I figured if I'm going to do it, I'm going to DO IT.

LOCATION - LOCATION - LOCATION - WHERE WILL IT GO???

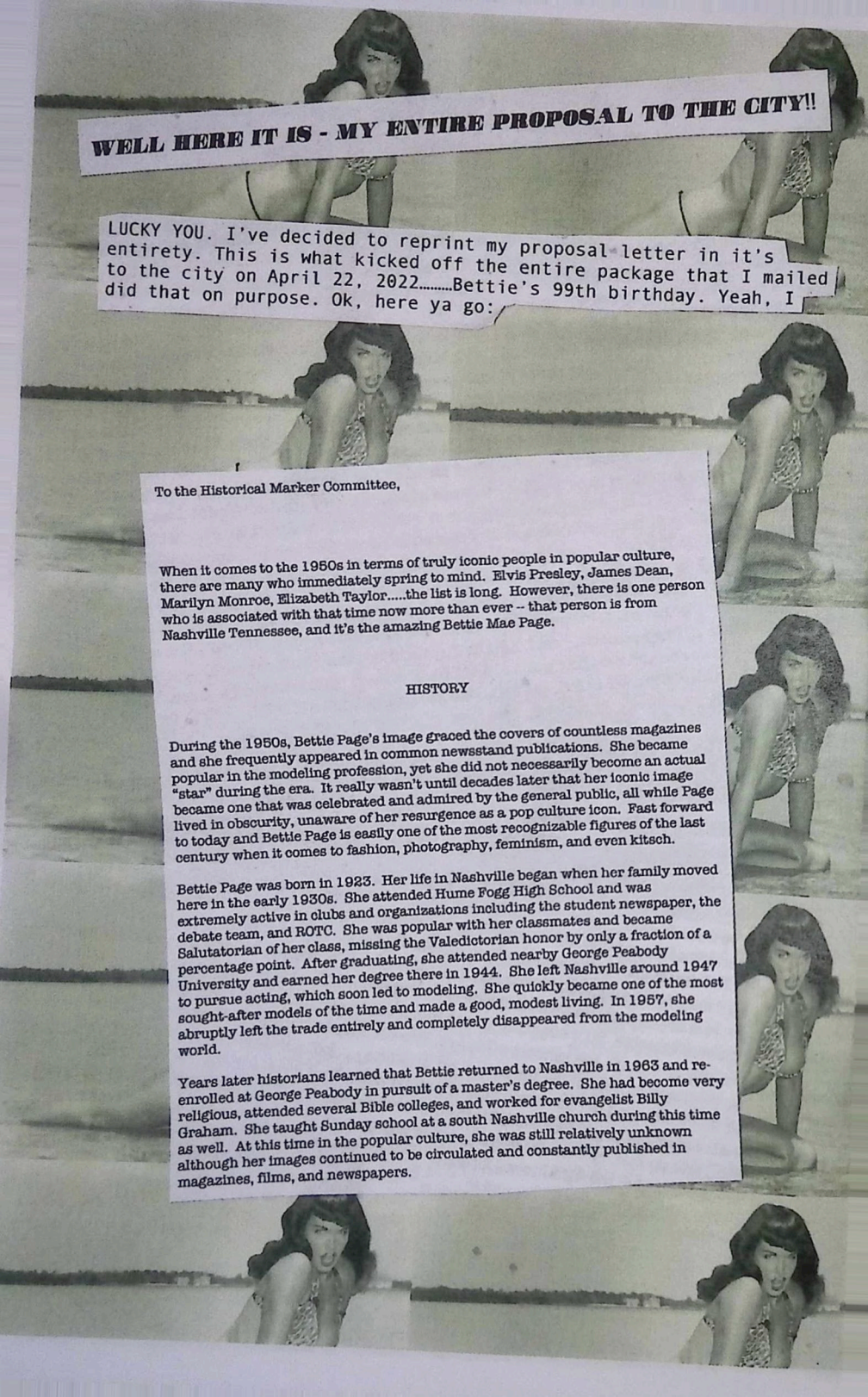
As I've already said, outside of Hume Fogg High School was the only option in my mind for the placement of the marker. Per the guidelines in the marker proposal. I needed to include a detailed description and layout for the location. This was a little tricky because I knew that it would need to be suggested to the school itself, as well as the city because as you know - side walk real estate in downtown Nashville is at a premium. I feel like every square foot of that part of town is valuable. SO, I suggested three locations around the school. The first was where it currently is: outside the school on 7th Ave. The second, on the sidewalk on the Rosa Parks side. The third was in front of the the school on Broadway....but honestly that was my last choice. I felt that it wouldn't get seen by as many people honestly if it were there. But back to the guide lines: I also had to get PERMISSION from the landowner. I didn't want to have to cold-call Hume Fogg and do that, so I kinda left that part as a gray area in my proposal. I figured that it could be addressed IF the idea moved forward.

LEFT:
Hume Fogg
in the 1940s



RIGHT:
Bettie as a
senior, 1940





WELL HERE IT IS - MY ENTIRE PROPOSAL TO THE CITY!!

LUCKY YOU. I've decided to reprint my proposal letter in it's entirety. This is what kicked off the entire package that I mailed to the city on April 22, 2022.....Bettie's 99th birthday. Yeah, I did that on purpose. Ok, here ya go:

To the Historical Marker Committee,

When it comes to the 1950s in terms of truly iconic people in popular culture, there are many who immediately spring to mind. Elvis Presley, James Dean, Marilyn Monroe, Elizabeth Taylor.....the list is long. However, there is one person who is associated with that time now more than ever -- that person is from Nashville Tennessee, and it's the amazing Bettie Mae Page.

HISTORY

During the 1950s, Bettie Page's image graced the covers of countless magazines and she frequently appeared in common newsstand publications. She became popular in the modeling profession, yet she did not necessarily become an actual "star" during the era. It really wasn't until decades later that her iconic image became one that was celebrated and admired by the general public, all while Page lived in obscurity, unaware of her resurgence as a pop culture icon. Fast forward to today and Bettie Page is easily one of the most recognizable figures of the last century when it comes to fashion, photography, feminism, and even kitsch.

Bettie Page was born in 1923. Her life in Nashville began when her family moved here in the early 1930s. She attended Hume Fogg High School and was extremely active in clubs and organizations including the student newspaper, the debate team, and ROTC. She was popular with her classmates and became Salutatorian of her class, missing the Valedictorian honor by only a fraction of a percentage point. After graduating, she attended nearby George Peabody University and earned her degree there in 1944. She left Nashville around 1947 to pursue acting, which soon led to modeling. She quickly became one of the most sought-after models of the time and made a good, modest living. In 1957, she abruptly left the trade entirely and completely disappeared from the modeling world.

Years later historians learned that Bettie returned to Nashville in 1963 and re-enrolled at George Peabody in pursuit of a master's degree. She had become very religious, attended several Bible colleges, and worked for evangelist Billy Graham. She taught Sunday school at a south Nashville church during this time as well. At this time in the popular culture, she was still relatively unknown although her images continued to be circulated and constantly published in magazines, films, and newspapers.

RESURGENCE OF AN ICON

It wasn't until the early 1980s that the beginnings of a Bettie Page resurgence in pop culture really began, totally unbeknownst to her. Artist Dave Stevens used her likeness to base a character on in his successful "Rocketeer" comic book. He made no secret of Bettie being an inspiration and was a huge fan of hers. Soon artists, actresses, musicians, and other people of influence were celebrating her likeness. By the late 80s and early 90s, there was a massive reinterest in Bettie due to new magazine articles, fanzines, comic books, and more. Publications such as Rolling Stone, LA Weekly, The Tennessean, and many more presented articles about the mysterious model from the past and asked the questions: Where did Bettie Page go? Was she still alive? At this time, she was still completely removed from the public eye and living in obscurity.

Bettie Page mania really took off in the 90s with mass merchandising and the advent of the internet. By the early 2000s, Bettie Page items including t-shirts, posters, home décor, and even action figures were popping up everywhere. She had become a fashion icon years after her prime and the world was fascinated by her story and lasting impact on fashion and modeling.

It turns out that Bettie was indeed still alive...and totally unaware of her new worldwide popularity. She didn't regret anything about her past as a pinup model, she just thought it was strange and odd that people were so enthralled by it after so much time. Fan sought her out and some even located her, mainly through the assistance of her brother who still lived in Nashville. At the time he too was unaware of her newly found cult-like stardom. Soon, with the help of some friends, Bettie was able to finally be compensated for the merchandising that was using her image and was able to live much more comfortably until her death in 2008.

Around 2014, The Bettie Page Clothing store opened on Broadway in Nashville just a stone's throw away from her alma mater of Hume Fogg High School. I remember thinking it was nice that her image was on that Broadway neon sign on the very street that she spent so much time on in her early years. The store closed a few years later unfortunately due to the rising change in Broadway commercial interests.

PROPOSAL

I believe that it is time for the city to recognize the cultural importance of being the hometown of this incredibly important person. I also believe that the marker should be in the vicinity of the school that played such an important role in her life. I have included a loose mock-up of what I feel a fitting marker tribute could be like after studying similar Tennessee markers over recent days. This of course is just an idea, and I welcome all changes! A proposed area for the marker is also included, on the block surrounding Hume Fogg. Just as in the way the recent marker on that same block at 715 Commerce St commemorating "The Jungle and Juanita's" is, it would fit nicely on the sidewalk easement owned by the city.

Why the Hume Fogg area? Mainly because it is unknown as to where Bettie lived as a child, as she came from a very low-income household who rented. Hume Fogg was where she excelled, developed, and came into her own as a person.

I think that a proper historical marker for Bettie Page would be good for the city in a cultural sense and could even attract visitors as a pilgrimage of sorts. Her fans are from all over the world, and I believe the addition of this marker by the city would be a fitting tribute to Nashville Tennessee's most famous style icon. The question of significance of Bettie Page to the state of Tennessee and the city of Nashville is along the same lines as to why other famous people in pop culture from here are significant. People are attracted to the idea of them, to the mystique, and to the stories about them. Much like Johnny Cash, she's had a critically acclaimed major motion picture made about her. Much like Dolly Parton, she has become an iconic female symbol embraced by people of all lifestyles. And much like Elvis Presley, her likeness can be found on merchandise all around the world and is readily available for fans to enjoy.

Thank you for any consideration,

Ben Wilkinson

WOULD I HEAR ANYTHING BACK??

WAS IT A WASTED EFFORT?

NOT AT ALL! I few weeks went by and one day I got an email from the administrator of the Metro Nashville Historical Commission. In the email she said:

"I received your application for a historical marker for Ms Bettie Mae Page last week, and will begin reviewing the text in the coming weeks. We have several markers on the docket for May and June, so I think we'll aim to have the MHC review this one at our July 25 meeting. I'll be in contact before that as we prep the text for the marker committee to review at their July 11 meeting. Both meetings are open to the public and you are welcome to to attend and hear the discussion / speak as the marker sponsor. I'll also keep you updated as I talk with MNPS / Hume Fogg about the best location for the marker downtown."

WELL, I'LL BE DAMN. It looked like it could be happening! I was thrilled. Just the idea that they would consider the marker was a win in my book. Notice that she said in the email that they would "prep the text" for the marker committee to review....so that's a whole thing. I submitted what I thought would be the best text for the marker (I spent wayyyyy too much time on a simple paragraph, haha) but I didn't know that I wouldn't get the final say on what the marker actually said. I mean, as long as it was close to what I wanted I would be happy honestly. Here's the text that I proposed:

Voted "Most Likely To Succeed" by her class at Hume Fogg High School as well as graduating Salutatorian in 1940, Bettie Page went on to become one of the most photographed models of the 1950s. After leaving the profession in 1957, Page totally disappeared from the public eye. After that, due to underground fandom, she slowly became a widely recognizable icon in pop culture history and is now known around the world as the original "Queen Of Pinups." Bettie Mae Page passed away in 2008.

Probably not the BEST writing for the marker, but I thought it was ok! So, the meeting to discuss the text that the committee decided on ended up being on July 14. I was never contacted about the new text and it got voted in. Don't get me wrong...I like the text that they approved, but it was weird that I wasn't involved....considering that I was going to have to pay for the marker. Yes, you read that right. As the sponsor I agreed to pay for the marker if approved - at the tune of around \$2,800.

**regardless of what happened going forward,
i was super excited. very surreal!!**

Here's the text that was approved at the meeting on July 14:

One of six children, Bettie Mae Page graduated from Hume-Fogg High School (1940) and George Peabody College (1944) before moving to New York to work as a model and actress. She became one of the most photographed pinup models of the 1950s and retired from public life in 1957. Page became an evangelical Christian and maintained a reclusive lifestyle, though she developed an underground cult following and was hailed as a feminist icon prior to her death in Los Angeles in 2008.

On Tuesday July 19 I got an email that on Monday, July 18 the committee met and approved the marker unanimously! OK so fun fact. On the evening of Monday July 18 I was at work and my phone started blowing up. It was on the news about the marker's approval....and I had no idea! People were sending me the news story left and right. It was pretty crazy. The next day however was even crazier.

THE MEDIA BLITZ BEGINS

I woke up the next day with an email from a reporter from WSMV Nashville. They wanted to do an interview immediately. WOO BOY I wasn't sure if I was ready for this, but I guess I had no choice! That afternoon I did a Zoom interview with the reporter and that night I was on the dang news looking like a deer in headlights. There were stories on all the local networks about it, as well as the Tennessean. National news outlets picked up the story including CNN, Fox News, USA Today.. Suddenly my name was everywhere. It was a tad scary to be honest. Social media posts started popping up - The Official Bettie Page account posted about it and that was exciting! Check this out:



Bettie Page

22h · 🌐

🐾 Exciting news! The Queen gets her due, thanks to devoted Bettie fan Ben Wilkinson! 🙌



usatoday.com

Pinup icon Bettie Page to receive historical marker in Nashville

👍❤️ 2.2K

54 comments 201 shares



BONUS: me looking like a deer in headlights on the news

MTSU ran a story about it on their website, which was pretty dang cool. I got a history degree from there and had always felt a little down about the fact that I never used it. The fact that my alma mater decided to do a feature story on this more than made up for that. Later that year I was featured in the alumni magazine. That was something that I know my mom would have loved to see.



MTSU Magazine graphic

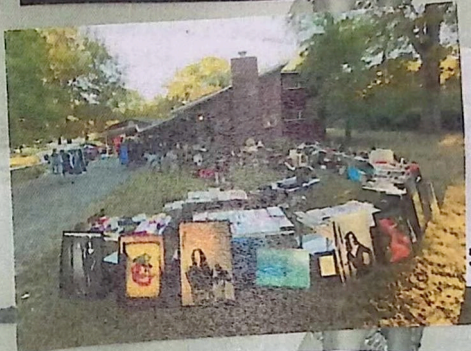
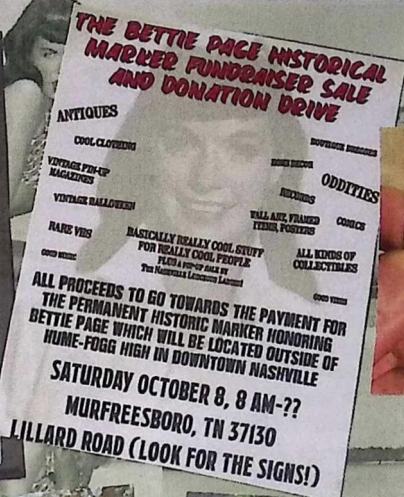


Gooty freeze frame from the NewsChannel 5 story

NOW WE GOTTA RAISE THE MONEY TO PAY FOR IT

OK, the dust started to settle a little and I knew that in short time the marker would go into production and I would need to pay for it. I thought about doing a GoFundMe.....but if you know me, you know that I tend to do everything the HARD way. I had this great idea.... what if we had a huge YARD SALE to raise the money? WAIT, WHAT? How could anyone raise nearly 3K at a yard sale? Yeah.....I know. Seemed impossible. But once again, I do things the hard way. A yard sale it is. Well, one good thing about that was the fact that me and my wife Lashon had a huge attic FULL of cool things. I used to go to flea markets and thrift stores religiously, back when you could actually get good stuff, and believe me...I bought it all. Lashon had tons of clothes and really cool dresses - a lot of pinup style stuff! WE HAD A TON OF STUFF. I started to think that we could pull off one of the coolest yard sales of all time. It was around this time that I reached out to a local pinup group called The Nashville Luscious Ladies - they offered to help out by bringing some stuff to the sale and helping out. The sale just got bigger! I then reached out to my friends Susie and Brian, who's house was an ideal location for such a sale. They were on board and they donated a ton of stuff to the sale as well. It was official: on Saturday, October 8th we were going to have the Bettie Page Historic Marker Fundraiser sale and donation drive!

It was a TON of work. I can't stress that enough. We almost killed ourselves getting everything ready and setting up. We set most everything up the night before the sale, then got up at 4 am and went back over to get ready. It was cold. We were in full blown warrior mode. I wasn't sure if people would come or not. I was sorta freaked out and was afraid we might have busted our butts for nothing! Then 8 am rolled around....and so did the cars. It was packed right from the start. EVERYBODY CAME. Friends, acquaintances, old friends, new friends....some people drove considerable distances. It was incredibly overwhelming. Most people tipped extra cash when they bought things. Some people just gave money and hung out. We sold so much stuff!! The Nashville Luscious Ladies came and were awesome and really helped out! They brought a ton of stuff too. Well, the sale ended and it was time to tally up the amount. We needed right around \$2,780. I started counting.... and about died of shock. We made \$2,787. Seven dollars more than we needed. Lucky number 7. Can you believe that? I still can't.



the yard sale!!



PEOPLE YOU MEET ALONG THE WAY

Throughout the whole process leading up to the upcoming dedication I had the really cool privilege of meeting lots of awesome people who were and are involved in the Bettie Page legacy. Pretty early on I was put in contact with one of Bettie's second cousins, Scot Page. He was really excited about all that was going on and I emailed with him pretty regularly. I also met Mark Mori early on via email - Mark was friends with Bettie and was the director of the essential documentary Bettie Page Reveals All. This is the documentary that was made while she was still alive and he got her to narrate it herself! Mark was really cool to get in touch with and he would share all my updates on his social media accounts. He had recently started The Official Bettie Page Podcast and while they had only put out around 8 episodes, I was a really liked it. I also met his co-host and fellow Bettie biographer Tori Rodriguez. Tori had written a couple of books on Bettie - the most notable being Bettie Page: The Lost Years, which focused on her early and post modeling years. She co-wrote it with Bettie's nephew Ron Brem. Ron is another person I got in touch with and he was very nice and thankful for what was going on. Other really cool people in the Bettie-verse that I met included Micheal Cobb - owner of Bettie Page Rum and Bettie Page Wine (and all around awesome dude!), Kate from the Official Bettie Page Store, and last but certainly not least Jennifer Baucum - sister of Dave Stevens, creator of the Rocketeer comics. I know I'm forgetting some but these are the ones that come to mind right off the bat. As a fan, it was really fun getting to correspond with people like this.

THE DEDICATION DATE IS SET - BETTIE PAGE DAY

We initially thought the dedication day would be in the late fall of 2022, but I soon learned that the monument company was WAY behind on orders and it wouldn't be until 2023 before it would be done. At first I was down about that - because I wanted it to happen and didn't want to wait any longer! BUT it turns out it was for the better. Once winter passed and I heard that the marker would be completed and delivered to the city by March, it was time to nail down a date. Lashon had the best idea: well, why not wait a little longer and dedicate it on her birthday? It hit me like a ton of bricks - her birthday on April 22 2023 would be HER 100th BIRTHDAY. And, it would be on a Saturday. It was a true "holy shit" moment. It HAD to happen on that day!! I suggested it to the city and they were totally on board. But then, I had another thought. WHAT IF....I got the mayor of Nashville to declare that day as "Bettie Page Day" in the city? Off to work I went again - quickly learned how to write a Mayoral Proclamation - did so - and submitted it to the mayor's office along with a cover letter. I heard back in less than a week.....It was official. Mayor Cooper agreed and accepted my proclamation and put in on a certificate for me to pick up. I drove to Nashville the next day and picked up the document and there it was: the city of Nashville had declared April 22 2023 as Bettie Page Day. Unbelievable!

CONTACTING THE GREATEST ARTIST IN THE WORLD

Things were getting real. And of course, more planning needed to be done. I decided that we now needed to have a reception of sorts after the dedication. I started thinking of cool places near downtown that could possibly be options....I really could only think of one place - The Blue Room at Third Man Records. Jack White is a fan of pinup culture as evidenced by his aesthetic and his association with Tempest Storm (a former Bettie collaborator). It would be a shoe-in, right? I contacted them and was a little bummed when they flat out said no! Oh well. Next option turned out to be a better idea anyways - Eastside Bowl. Sure, it was a little drive from downtown...BUT let's face it: it was kinda good to get out of downtown. Eastside Bowl were really really cool to us and basically let us have free reign of the place. More on that in a minute.....now we needed a poster to promote all of this. Once again, Lashon to the rescue. She suggested one of our favorite artists, Mitch O'Connell. Mitch has been drawing Bettie since the 80s and is one of the best kitsch pop culture artists around. I thought there would be NO WAY he'd do it, or if he did it would be prohibitively expensive. I sent an email anyways. HE RESPONDED. He said he'd love to design it. We couldn't believe it. I called him the next day and we chatted about it - he was so nice and pleasant....I'm sure I was talking 100 miles an hour about ideas and stuff. Around a week later he sent an email with an attachment. "Here it is!", he said. I looked and was just FLOORED. It was perfect. Pretty sure I teared up. If you looked up "solid dude" in the dictionary, there would be a picture of Mitch O'Connell. I then asked....."Mitch, how much do we owe you?". He responded and said there was no charge, and it was "for Bettie." As if I couldn't be any more blown away by everything that had happened..... How cool was that? I thanked him excessively, then in return placed a very large order off his website as a secret way of saying thanks. Here is the poster in all of it's glory - this is one of my favorite things EVER:

HISTORICAL MARKER DEDICATION and 100th BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION!



The
Iconic
Bombshell
Queen of
Pinups!

BETTIE PAGE DAY!

April 22nd 3pm 2023
Outside Hume-Fogg
High School
700 Broadway
Nashville, TN

Afterparty at Eastside Bowl
1508 Gallatin Pike 5pm

Metropolitan Government of Nashville
and Davidson County

Office of the Mayor

A PROCLAMATION RECOGNIZING APRIL 22nd, 2023 AS
BETTIE PAGE DAY

WHEREAS Bettie Page was born and lived in Nashville and she will forever remain a significant figure in the history of the city, and

WHEREAS Bettie Page is known for being the first photograph of the "pin-up girl" and

WHEREAS Bettie Page is known for being a trailblazer in the modeling and fashion world in the 1950s and is one of the most significant pin-up girls of the 20th century and

WHEREAS Bettie Page is regarded as a pioneering figure in the history of the modeling industry and her work is still celebrated today for her pioneering work in the industry and her role in the modeling industry of the 1950s and

WHEREAS Bettie Page has been a role model for many young women in the industry and her work is still celebrated today for her pioneering work in the industry and her role in the modeling industry of the 1950s and

WHEREAS Bettie Page is one of the most influential and recognizable pin-up girls in the history of the industry and

WHEREAS Bettie Page is a role model for many young women in the industry and her work is still celebrated today for her pioneering work in the industry and her role in the modeling industry of the 1950s and

WHEREAS Bettie Page is one of the most influential and recognizable pin-up girls in the history of the industry and

WHEREAS Bettie Page is a role model for many young women in the industry and her work is still celebrated today for her pioneering work in the industry and her role in the modeling industry of the 1950s and

NOW, THEREFORE, I, John Cooper, Mayor of the Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County do hereby proclaim April 22nd, 2023 as Bettie Page Day and encourage all citizens to participate in the celebration of this day.

John Cooper
Mayor

The proclamation from the city!!

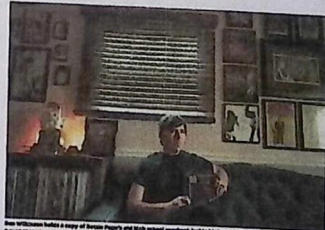
THE BIG DAY HAS ARRIVED

Leading up to the dedication day I got to do some more interviews, one of which was with an old friend Dave Paulson from the Tennessean. He came to the house and we hung out for a while - it was really fun. He told me that he was going to make sure the feature story made it into the print edition - how cool! Also Forrest Sanders from WTVF came by a few days before the 22nd and filmed some stuff for a feature story. I was nervous but did my best.. Forrest has since become a cool friend of mine. He does the best stories for WTVF. The day before the dedication the newspaper came out with the story in it - I went to the market and got one, flipped through it, and couldn't find it. Ah, bummer! It didn't make it. I sat it down on the car seat and that's when I noticed. OH. SHIT. It's on the front cover. IT'S THE COVER STORY. Well I'll be damn.

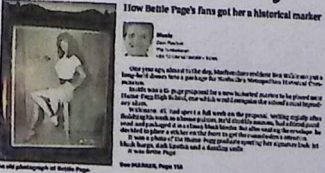
The headline read "Now, I think Nashville is ready." That came from a quote where I said that I didn't think Nashville would have approved this marker 20 or so years ago. It has become quite the progressive place since then.

THE TENNESSEAN

"I just blow my mind that something that started, with such a timeless look, was from Nashville and wasn't a country line"



'Now, I think Nashville is ready'



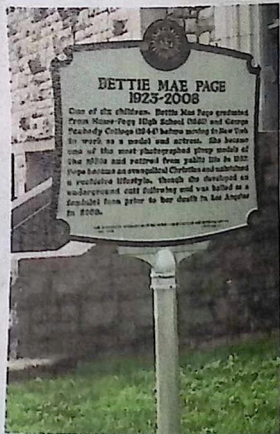
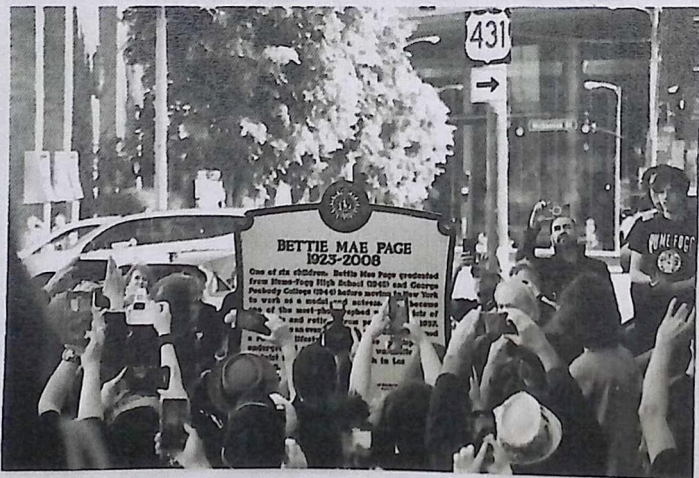
The photograph of Bettie Page

That was just the start of the day - then I had to head to Nashville to be on the NPR radio show "This is Nashville". I was as nervous as could be. I think I did OK though! It was an episode all about Bettie Page and the other guests included Mark Mori, Tori Rodriguez, and Ron Brem. Later that day, I went to Hume Fogg because they were installing the marker. I met with Jessica from the Historical Commission for the first time in person there, and there it was. It was like seeing the main boss at the end of a video game. It was beautiful! I got to see it before the city workers covered it with paper - so it wouldn't be exposed before the big unveiling. I can tell you right now that it was the best feeling when I saw it for the first time.



DEDICATION DAY - THIS IS IT - DON'T GET SCARED NOW

The big day arrived and I had already felt like I had ran a marathon - fun fact: there was a HUGE marathon in downtown Nashville that morning, and I was worried about crowds / parking, but by the time we went downtown it had pretty much dissipated. We got to Hume Fogg, I set up the PA, and the people started showing up hours before it was supposed to start. There was a documentary crew there who were filming for some upcoming project, every local news crew, newspaper, it was pretty wild. The executor of Bettie's estate was there - Mark Roesler. Tori Rodriguez came, Mark Mori, Ron Brem - they all spoke at the dedication. My head was spinning from meeting so many people! At around 3:30 we pulled the cover off the marker after everyone had spoken and my good friend Eric Giles captured this picture - which has since become one of my fave pics of all time:



The afterparty at Eastside Bowl was amazing. Tons of people came out! Legendary pinup model Bernie Dexter was there and Bettie Page Rum had some special themed drinks on the menu. The Nashville Luscious Ladies REALLY helped out with this. They put on a fashion show featuring Bettie Page Clothing and had a pinup contest. Local TV horror host Dr. Gangrene was the M.C. and Ryan Sweeney from Sweet Time Records was spinning records. There was a birthday cake for Bettie's 100th and everyone sang happy birthday. It could not have gone more perfectly!

HUGE THANKS: Katie Galaz, Larry Underwood, Brian Hickman, Susie Overman, The Nashville Luscious Ladies, Eastside Bowl, The City of Nashville, Hume Fogg, Bettie fans worldwide, and most importantly Lashon Miller for keeping me grounded and focused on everything. I couldn't have done it without her!

thanks for reading!
ben. feb 2025

THE END